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SUNRISE MOUNTAIN NATURAL AREA

NEVADA BLM WILDERNESS REPORT FEBRUARY, 1980

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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
NEVADA STATE OFFICE

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WILDERNESS REPORT

Sunrise Mountain

Natural Area

Bureau of Land Management

Department of the Interior

February 28, 1980

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Sunrise Mountain Natural Area

	Page
Recommendation	
I. Results of Review for Wilderness Characteristics	1
II. Economic and Social Impacts	1
III. Analysis of Effects of Recommendation	1
IV. Discussion of Options Foregone	1
V. Recommendation	2
VI. Approval	2
Maps	
Natural Area and Contiguous Roadless Area	3
Photographic Documentation	4
Statistical Summary	5
Photographs	6
Background Information	
I. Statement of Previous Designation	8
II. Significant Resource Data	8
III. Description of Report Area	8
IV. Summary of Public Participation	8
Appendix	
Situation Evaluation - Initial Inventory	10
Letters Received	14

RECOMMENDATION

Sunrise Mountain Natural Area

I. Results of Review for Wilderness Characteristics:

Sunrise Mountain Natural Area, 10,240 acres, was evaluated along with its contiguous roadless area, inventory unit NV-050-0420. This unit was determined to "clearly and obviously lack wilderness characteristics" during the State-wide Initial Inventory.

NV-050-0420 - Sunrise Mountain

Area Description and Size: The area (29,475 acres) consists of a gently sloping bajada to the east, rising to rolling hills and mountains to the west. The vegetation is desert shrubs and grasses. Sunrise Mountain Natural Area is included in the unit.

Naturalness: A paved highway, numerous roads, powerlines, communication sites, and various structures clearly leave the unit in an unnatural condition.

Outstanding Opportunities: The area clearly does not offer either outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined recreation.

Supplemental Values: None are known, other than the natural area designation.

II. Economic and Social Impacts:

The release of the Natural Area and its contiguous roadless acreage from wilderness consideration would not change the current management of Sunrise Mountain Natural Area. Therefore, no economic or social impacts are expected to result from this recommendation.

III. Analysis of Effects of Recommendations:

The long and short-term effects of releasing Sunrise Mountain Natural Area from the interim management protection provided to lands under wilderness review and returning it to its previous management as a Natural Area would be that all uses and developments which previously were compatible with that management would continue to be permitted.

IV. Discussion of Options Foregone:

The recommendation of Sunrise Mountain Natural Area as suitable for wilderness is the only option foregone by the adoption of the present recommendation. Because the evidence of man's activities in this area are beyond rehabilitation by hand labor or natural

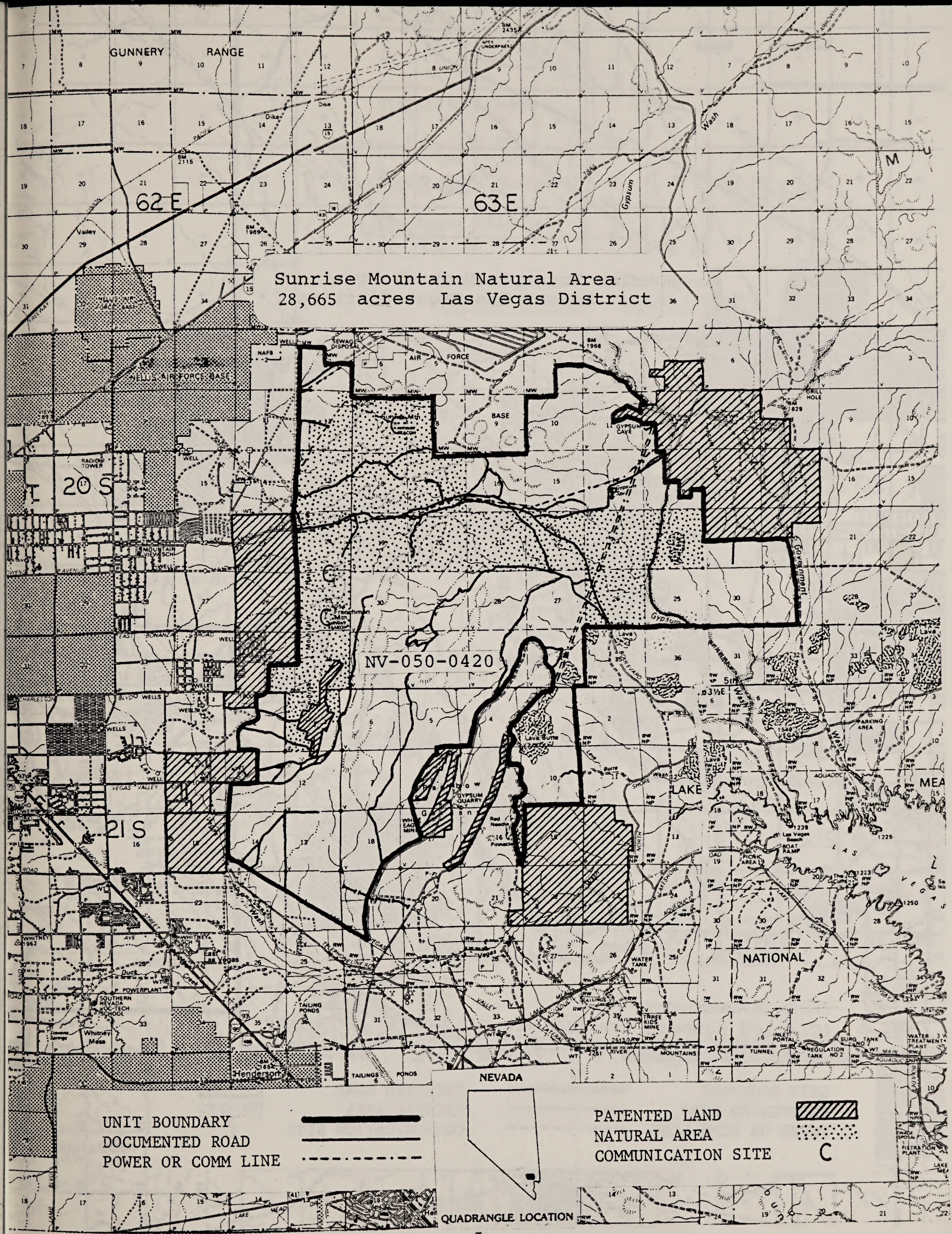
means, the Natural Area does not now, nor will it ever, meet the naturalness criteria for wilderness suitability. Therefore, the adoption of the present recommendation will not affect any options considered in the future for the management of this area.

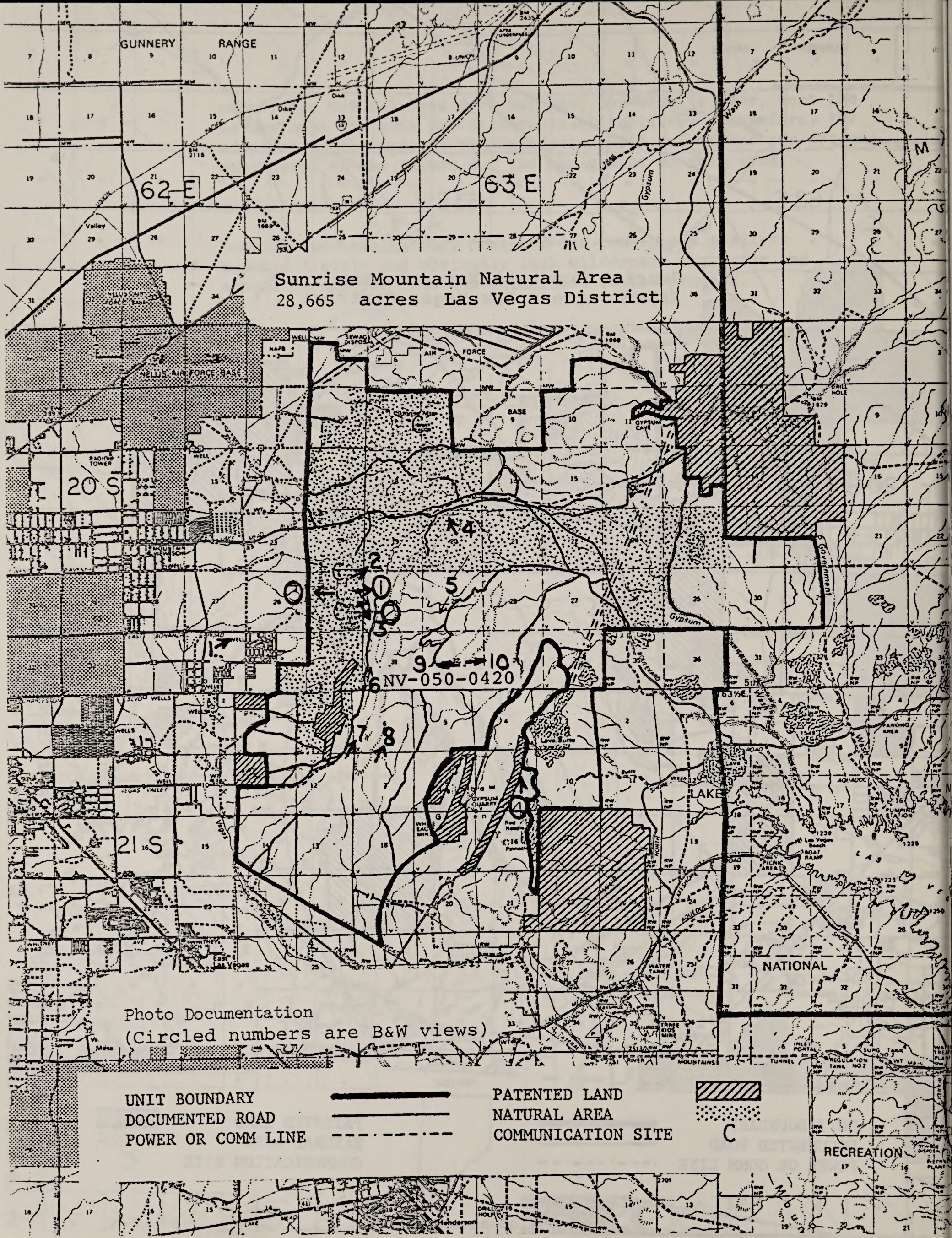
V. Recommendation:

Sunrise Mountain Natural Area and its contiguous roadless acreage clearly and obviously lack wilderness character and should be dropped from the wilderness review process.

VI. Approval:

District Manager	2/11/80 Date
State Director	3/5/80 Date
Director	JUN 27 1980 Date


Sunrise Mountain Natural Area
28,665 acres Las Vegas District
NV-050-0420
GUNNERY RANGE
62 E
63 E
21 S
20 S
NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE
AIR FORCE BASE
Sunrise Mtn
Frenchman Mtn
Lava Butte
GYPSUM QUARRY
Red Needle
Pinnacle
Gypsum Wash
Government Wash
LAKE MEAD NATIONAL
Las Vegas Wash
Duck Creek
Whitney Mesa
Henderson
East Las Vegas
SOUTHERN NEVADA VOC-TECH SCHOOL
TAILING PONDS
TAILINGS
PONDS
WATER TANK
THREE KIDS MINE
PICNIC AREA
BOAT RAMP
PUMPING STATION
PARKING AREA
INLET PORTAL
TUNNEL
REGULATION TANK NO 2
SURG TANK NO 2
WATER TREATMENT PLANT
NEVADA
QUADRANGLE LOCATION
UNIT BOUNDARY
DOCUMENTED ROAD
POWER OR COMM LINE
PATENTED LAND
NATURAL AREA
COMMUNICATION SITE
C


Sunrise Mountain Natural Area
28,665 acres Las Vegas District
GUNNERY RANGE
62 E
63 E
NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE
20 S
21 S
NV-050-0420
LAKE
NATIONAL
RECREATION
Photo Documentation
(Circled numbers are B&W views)
UNIT BOUNDARY
DOCUMENTED ROAD
POWER OR COMM LINE
PATENTED LAND
NATURAL AREA
COMMUNICATION SITE

STATISTICAL SUMMARY

Sunrise Mountain Natural Area

Clark County, Nevada

Las Vegas District

	Previously Designated Area	Contiguous Lands (if any)	Total
Acres With Wilderness Characteristics	0	0	0
Acres With Wilderness Characteristics			
Recommended For Designation	0	0	0
Recommended Against Designation	0	0	0
Ownership in Study Area (11-7-79)			
BLM	10,070	18,595	28,665
Water and Power Resources	0	560	560
Private	170	80	250
			29,475

Photo #1 Looking east from inside the Natural Area toward surrounding land.

Photo #2 From Frenchman Mountain looking southeast into valley bordering Natural Area.

Photo #3 Looking west from Frenchman Mountain toward Las Vegas.

Photo #4 Looking northeast past Lava Butte toward the Natural Area.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

I. Statement of Previous Designation:

Sunrise Mountain Natural Area was designated in the Notice of Proposed Classification of Public Lands for Multiple-Use Management published in the Federal Register, Vol. 35, No. 187 - Friday, September 25, 1970. The area was identified as having unique geologic, biologic, and esthetic values.

II. Significant Resource Data:

A. Gypsum Cave, located in the northeastern corner of the contiguous roadless area, contains some of the earliest evidence of man in Nevada and the western United States.

B. A Threatened and Endangered plant, Arctomecon californica or bearpoppy, is located in the northeastern portion of the contiguous roadless area and the eastern end of the Natural Area. It typically prefers gypsum soils, which are common to this area.

C. Another Threatened and Endangered plant, Agave utahensis var. eborispina or century plant, is believed to grow at the central western edge of the Natural Area.

III. Description of Report Area:

The Sunrise Mountain Natural Area is located eight miles east of Las Vegas. A major highway accessing Lake Mead National Recreation Area runs through the Natural Area, and the Sunrise Mountain area is heavily used for a variety of dispersed activities. Frenchman Mountain is a widely recognized landmark of the Las Vegas area. A discussion of the influence area of the recommendation, as presented in the regional discussion of the area in URA Step 4, is not available.

IV. Summary of Public Participation:

A. This area was evaluated with other units in the Statewide Initial Wilderness Inventory. During the 90-day public comment period, which began on May 1, 1979, and concluded July 30, news releases and a Federal Register Notice were used to inform the various publics of the review period, the opportunity for comment, and locations of meetings. The story was carried widely in Southern Nevada newspapers. Several local radio stations and one TV station covered the comment period. Both the Lincoln and Esmeralda County Commissions as well as the Lincoln County Conservation District Board were briefed. Several local organizations such as Southern Nevada Conservation Council, Nevada Public Land Users Association, and the Sierra Club were briefed.

An open house was conducted at the Las Vegas District Office relating to the District recommendations, and Statewide summary meetings were also conducted in Las Vegas, Reno, Battle Mountain and Ely.

B. The only comment received on this area noted that resource values other than wilderness are significant in the area.

APPENDIX

WILDERNESS INVENTORY
SITUATION EVALUATION

I. WILDERNESS UNIT IDENTIFICATION

Area/Island Name (if available): Sunrise Mountain

Inventory Unit No.: NV-050-0420

State: Nevada District: Las Vegas

II. UNIT ANALYSIS

Describe the following applicable factors in a concise narrative; use additional sheets if necessary; supplement with photographs.

A. Ownership: Entirely Federal Government.

B. Size of Unit or Number and Size Estimates of Multiple Units: One unit of 28,861 acres.

C. Easements: Numerous powerline and highway easements, communication sites.

D. Leases: Unknown.

E. Mining Claims: 82 Lode claims, 7,140 acres of placer claims.

F. Permanent Improvements: Paved highway, numerous roads, powerlines, communication sites, structures.

G. Existing Uses: General.

H. Human Activity: General Recreation.

I. Land Treatment/Manipulations: None known.

J. General Vegetation and Topographic Features: The general vegetation and topography of the area consists of low growing desert shrubs and grasses growing on a gentle sloping bajada along the east half of the unit with rolling hills and mountains along the western half.

K. Contiguous Lands: Contiguous to Nellis Air Force Base on the north; and to Lake Mead NRA on the southeast.

III. UNIT EVALUATION

A. Select one of the following:

/ / 1. The area appears to have potential for further wilderness consideration

/X/ 2. The area obviously and clearly does not have potential for wilderness.

Explain your rationale for selection: Naturalness has been greatly diminished by the intrusions that are found within the unit. Therefore, the area should be removed from the inventory process.

B. Is Area or Island of Sufficient Size: Yes.

C. Is There Enough Public Support for Intensive Wilderness Inventory of the Area or Island or Any Part: Unknown.

IV. UNIT RECOMMENDATION

A. Check Appropriate Block:

/ / 1. Area or island (or groupings) is recommended for intensive wilderness inventory.

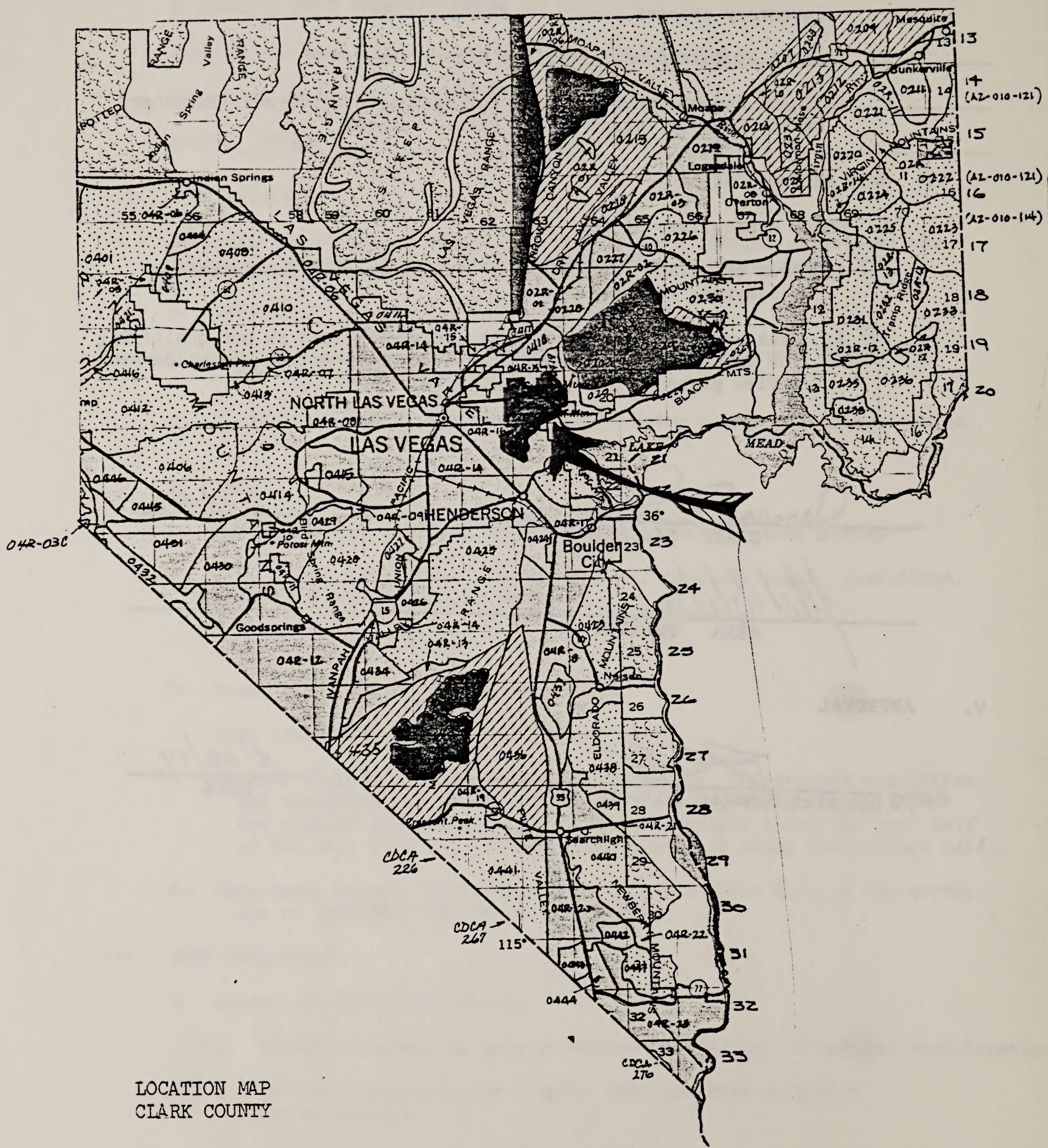
/X/ 2. Area or island (or groupings) is recommended as not qualifying for further inventory and should be dropped from the wilderness review process.

James P. Quinn — 3/1/79
STAFF SIGNATURE — DATE

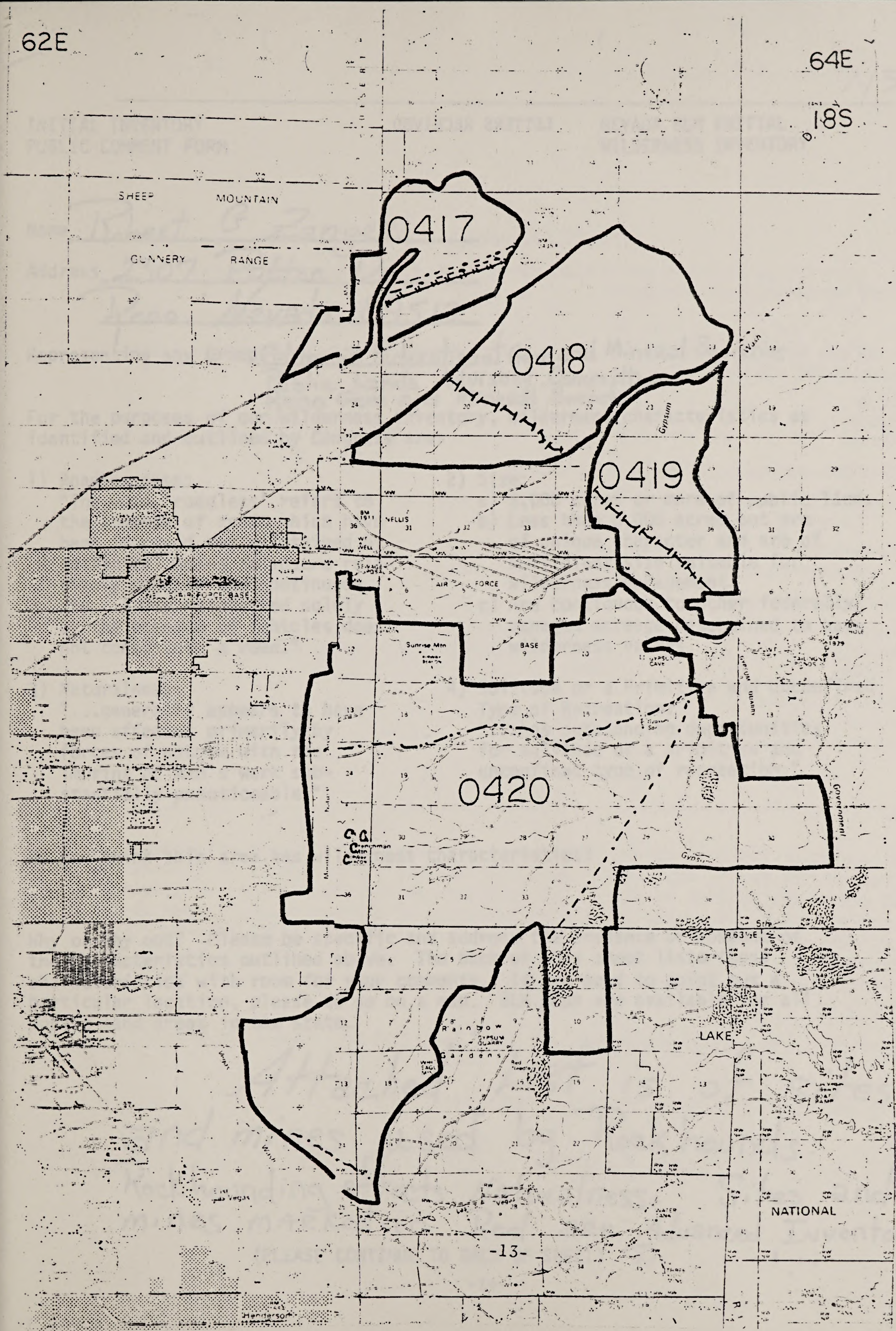
[illegible] — 3/1/79
AREA MANAGER — DATE

V. APPROVAL

[illegible] — 8/28/79
Acting District Manager Initials — DATE



LOCATION MAP
CLARK COUNTY


62E
64E
18S
SHEEP MOUNTAIN
GUNNERY RANGE
0417
0418
0419
0420
Gypsum
Wash
WELLIS
AIR FORCE
BASE
Sunrise Mtn
Rainbow
Gardens
LAKE
NATIONAL
Henderson

LETTERS RECEIVED

1-3

INITIAL INVENTORY
PUBLIC COMMENT FORM

NEVADA BLM INITIAL
WILDERNESS INVENTORY

Name Robert G Zangen

Address 2307 Patton Dr
Reno Nevada 89512

Representing any Group California Federation of Gem and Mineral Societies
Public Lands Advisory Committee
Reno Gem and Mineral Society

For the purposes of our wilderness inventory, wilderness characteristics as identified and outlined by Congress are:

1) Roadlessness:
"The word 'roadless' refers to the absence of roads which have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to insure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road."

2) Size:
a) 5,000 acres or more of public land.
b) Less than 5,000 acres but are of unique character and are of sufficient size suitable for wilderness management.
c) Are contiguous to other federally managed acreage determined to have wilderness values.

3) Naturalness:
"...generally appears to have been affected primarily by forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable."

4) Solitude or a Primitive and Unconfined Type of Recreation:
"...has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation."

Do you think this area has wilderness characteristics?

Why or why not? Please be specific and address the presence or absence of the characteristics outlined above. The back of this sheet lists those characteristics with room for your comments. If you need to point out a particular location, please do so on a map. BLM maps are available for all public land areas in the state.

Attached List is of sites and mines used by Rockhounds. Rockhounding effects Naturalness. Sites and mines marked in Red are Advanced Inventory

(PLEASE CONTINUE TO BACK OF SHEET) D

SIZE:

2/3

NATURALNESS

". . . generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable . . ."

Wilderness Act — 1964

You can help by telling us the location on a map and the size of manmade improvements (physical structures) associated with uses such as:

Mines	Reservoirs	Towers
Cabins	Check Dams	Other
Fences	Building	

and improvements associated with existing uses, such as:

Leases, when surface disturbance has occurred or is occurring
(i.e., grazing, oil and gas, geothermal, coal, etc.)

Rights-Of-Way
(i.e., railroads, ditches, powerlines, pipelines, telephones)

Vegetative manipulations, such as:

Reseeding	Range Improvements
Spraying	Watershed (planting grass, soil stabilization)
Chaining	Other

Other existing uses such as:

Christmas Tree Cutting	Rockhounding	ORV
Livestock Operations	Other	

If you think the area lacks naturalness, but otherwise contains wilderness characteristics, it may be considered for further study when it is reasonable to expect the imprint of man's work to return or be returned to a substantially unnoticeable level either by natural processes or by hand labor. Lands where imprints of man's work require artificial rehabilitation by use of power machinery to return them to a natural condition, except litter collection and removal, will not be considered as meeting the wilderness characteristics criteria.

Does this area, in your opinion, fit this description? Please explain why.

No

Why and how do you think it can be rehabilitated?

Shouldn't Multiple use is best

3/3

125

Hoover Dam 30' Quad

T21S R63½E sec 18, 7
T21S R64E sec 7, 8, 17, 18

Jasper & Agate

Sunrise Mt. Area
T20S R63E 18, 19
T20S R62E 13, 24
Contains Black Agate

NV 050 - 0420 B2

Three Kids Mine
T21S R63E 34, 35
T22S R63E 2, 3
Amethystine

NV 050 - 0422

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